

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MAY 11, 2010
MANSFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Town Clerk Mary Stanton called the Annual Town Meeting for Budget Consideration to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Mansfield Middle School Auditorium. The Town Clerk read the Notice and Warning of the Meeting and explained the eligibility requirements for voting. She then requested nominations for Moderator.

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson nominated Carol Pellegrine to serve as Moderator. Hearing no other nominations the nominations were closed. Motion to approve Mrs. Pellegrine as Moderator passed unanimously.

Mrs. Pellegrine outlined the rules of debate for the meeting. Without objection Town Clerk Mary Stanton was appointed secretary to the meeting. A motion to follow Roberts Rules of Order was approved without objection. Mrs. Pellegrine requested that citizens limit their comments to five minutes.

Mrs. Pellegrine recognized Mayor Elizabeth Paterson who described the budget as responsible and carefully crafted to maintain the quality of services in the Town while not increasing the mill rate. The Mayor complimented the members of the Council on their willingness to work together in this endeavor, commenting that while members did not always agree they were always respectful of one another's opinions. Mayor Paterson also thanked the Town Manager Matt Hart and the Director of Finance Cherie Trahan for presenting a budget with a minimal increase that still addresses the needs of the Town.

Mayor Paterson introduced the Chair of the Council Finance Committee Bill Ryan and Mansfield Board of Education Chair Mark LaPlaca to present a more detailed explanation of the budget.

Councilor Ryan briefly reviewed the General Fund, the Capital Fund and the Capital and Nonrecurring Fund budgets. The General Fund budget total including the education budgets is \$43,626,285.00, a 0.6% increase over the current year. Mr. Ryan highlighted the general government expenditure trends and the revenue outlooks. In summary Mr. Ryan noted the tax impact on the average single family residence would be a 1.1% increase or about a \$47 tax increase.

Board of Education Chair Mark LaPlaca described the Board's budget as one that maintains all current services and classroom enrollment size while actually decreasing the size of the overall budget by \$7,410.00. Mr. LaPlaca thanked Superintendent Fred Baruzzi for his leadership and willingness, once again, to not fill the assistant superintendent position. He also acknowledged the Board for their work.

Mr. Ryan offered the following resolutions for consideration:

RESOLVED: That the proposed General Fund Budget for the Town of Mansfield for fiscal year July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 in the amount of \$33,702,055 which proposed budget was adopted by the Council on April 19, 2010 be adopted and that the sums estimated and set forth in said budget be appropriated for the purpose indicated.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-51, the proportionate share for the Town of Mansfield of the annual budget for Regional School District No. 19 shall be added to the General Fund Budget appropriation for the Town of Mansfield for fiscal year July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 and said sums shall be paid by the Town to the Regional School District as they become available.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Capital Projects Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 in the amount of \$20,051,420 be adopted provided that the portion proposed to be funded by bonds or notes shall, at the appropriate times, be introduced for action by the Town Council as required by Section 407 of the Town Charter.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Capital and Non-Recurring Reserve Fund Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 in the amount of \$957,545 be adopted.

Moderator Carol Pellegrine requested comments.

Councilor Meredith Lindsey offered comments from the Republican members of the Council. Ms. Lindsey thanked the Town Manager, Director of Finance, Town Staff and fellow Council members for their work on the budget noting that it was a pleasure to work with all involved. Ms. Lindsey commented that given the bleak outlook for the state budget in future years the Republicans urged the Council to change their philosophy on spending, eliminating all non-essential items. She noted that although some of their suggestions were included in the approved budget the Republicans did not support the budget.

Councilor Toni Moran, echoed Ms. Lindsey's comments regarding the tenor of the budget negotiations. Ms. Moran commented that there were a couple of pressing issues the majority thought important to add back into the budget. These include the addition of funding for a part time volunteer coordinator for the senior transportation project, an increase in the hours of the Senior Center Social Worker of a day a week starting in January 2011, and the addition of a state trooper to increase coverage throughout Town. The adopted budget also moves purchases of under \$10,000 out of bonding and into capital projects. Ms. Moran stated the Council was able to provide these needed items while keeping the mill rate the same.

Howard Raphaelson, Timber Drive posed three questions regarding the Community Center and the Parks and Recreation budgets. Prior to the Community Center what was the General Fund contribution to Parks and Recreation? What is the current Parks and Recreation budget? What are the

cost of the Community Center activities from the general Parks and Recreation budget?

Director of Finance Cherie Trahan addressed each question. The current General Fund and Capital Nonrecurring Fund contributions to the Parks and Recreation budget is \$385,000.00. Prior to the Community Center the contributions totaled \$285,000.00. Additionally in recent years the Council has added \$75,000.00 for community activities and \$25,000.00 per year for support of the teen center. Member services are covered by the cost of membership.

Tom Markland, Flaherty Road, questioned what the full cost of the Storrs Center build out and the Town's liability if the project doesn't work out.

Town Manager Matt Hart responded that the Town is in the process of negotiating a development agreement on the public components of the project. The purpose of this agreement is to protect the Town. Mr. Hart noted the majority of funds for the project will be from private sources.

Roger Roberge, Woodland Road, asked what the conditions of employment are in Town and suggested it might be preferable to hire a resident taxpayer. Mr. Roberge wondered if the new state trooper might be from Town. Mr. Roberge asked the cost of hiring a new teacher in the middle school and opined the cost savings if only one of the four budgeted positions were filled.

Mr. Roberge moved to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$200,000.00. Lacking a second the motion failed.

Moderator Carol Pellegrine explained the procedure for the vote on the budget. She explained that since no amendments had been offered the vote would be on the budget as proposed by the Town Council.

The vote on the budget was as follows:

YES	188
NO	39

The motion to approve the budget, as presented, passed.

Without objection a motion to adjourn at 8: 28 p.m. passed.

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

